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Week 2: Assignment 4: Thematic Unit Rationale

The unit on Relationships in U.S. (Cultures, Values/Beliefs, and Institutions) will realize the following, as discussed in the *Doing History* textbook:

* Interpretive – Students will be reading, listening to, and looking at sources/accounts from the specific period, including individuals who were children at the time.

* Emphasis on narratives – There a multiple primary sources narratives available through the internet so the students will be able to hear how individual throughout U.S. history from different socio-economic, race/ethnic as well as gender viewed the U.S. policies/laws and the implementation of them.
* Not just about Politics – the unit will use primary sources from multiple perspectives – not just the wealthy, landholder, white males who dominated both politics and diplomacy.
* Purposeful – By looking at these policies/laws and their implementation to inform students about the past, regarding current issues, and how the past may influence the present/future and how they (students), as citizens, can be advocates, for or against change, of the status quo.
* In-Depth Learning - Using a current issue, i.e., immigration, equal rights, education, citizenship, freedom of speech, etc. requires the students to look at the issue throughout U.S. history from various perspectives and from today’s point of view and determine how ‘it should be’ today. They will also learn how individuals, sometimes children, made a difference.
* Disciplined Inquiry – Students will question the issue and how it relates to today. They will find/review primary and secondary sources, review and draw their conclusions for why a policy/law was established, who it may have affected, and whether it is still appropriate or may need to change.
* Teacher Scaffolding – The unit will require demonstrations/mini-lessons on locating and reviewing primary/secondary sources; organizing facts; comparing and contrasting/ evaluating impact/effect on various groups of people and then deciding whether it is still appropriate for today’s issue. The scaffolding will be ongoing throughout the unit, assisting individuals/groups in the review/evaluation of sources.
* Constructive Assessment – Throughout the unit the students will receive feedback and assessment from the teacher as well as other students during the various lessons of the unit. Majority of these will be formative. There will be ‘rule’ set up that the feedback must be positive and helpful. The role of the students to be an advocate on a specific issue will enable them to demonstrate their understanding to an ‘outside’ entity and receive feedback.

The lessons will have opportunities for the students to be observed and provided formative assessments throughout the unit, including specific performance requirements.